



ADOT STATEWIDE ACCESS MANAGEMENT PLAN



PRESCOTT DISTRICT AGENCY STAFF WORKSHOP

June 1, 2006 / 2:00 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.

ADOT Prescott District Office Conference Room,
1109 Commerce Drive, Prescott

ATTENDANCE

John Pein, *ADOT, Planning Manager*
Dallas Hammit, *ADOT, Yuma District Engineer*
Roger Hopt, *ADOT Regional Traffic Engineer*
Rob Iagham, *Tonto National Forest*
Chip Davis, *Yavapai County Board of Supervisors*
Pat Martin, *Dewey - Humboldt*
Mike Willett, *Yavapai County*
Chris Bridges, *Yavapai County*
Bob LaJeunesse, *ADOT Maintenance*
Janet Doersting, *ADOT*

Norm Davis, *Town of Prescott Valley*
Chris Fetzer, *NACOG*
Elise Link, *Yavapai County*
Ken Spedding, *Yavapai County*
Chris Mass, *Yavapai-Prescott Indian Tribe (YPIT)*
Jim Cofer, *Town of Chino Valley*
Kevin Howell, *YPIT – J & K Engineering*
Tim Costello, *City of Cottonwood*
George Gehlert, *City of Cottonwood*

Consultant Staff in Attendance

Rick Ensdorff, *URS*
Caraly Foreman, *URS*

Jennifer Spencer, *URS*

HANDOUTS:

Agency Outreach Meeting – Agenda (1 page)
Conceptual Access Management Decision Flow Chart (1 page)
Arizona Statewide Access Management Program Overview (pamphlet)
Benefits Of A Statewide Access Management Program For Arizona (pamphlet)

MEETING SUMMARY

An Agency Staff Workshop of the Statewide Access Management Program project was held on June 1, 2006 at the ADOT Prescott District Office Conference Room, 1109 Commerce Drive in Prescott, Arizona.

1. Introductions

John Pein, ADOT Manager, Regional / Statewide Planning, began introductions and gave some information on what the project means, and the importance of stakeholder participation.

Dallas Hammit, ADOT Prescott District Engineer, then spoke about the need for Access Management. He mentioned that almost every area is affected by the Access Management plan. He went on to add that the biggest threat within ADOT is access related issues.

Rick Ensdorff asked the attendants to go around the room and introduce themselves. He then gave a quick background of his professional experience. He presented a brief summary of why the program is needed, and talked about the importance and benefits of Access Management Program, how we got to where we are, and provided samples of other efforts like State of Colorado and New Mexico, and the objective of access management. Rick stressed that in order for this project to work; it would require input from all agencies and would need to be a partnership between the local agencies and ADOT. He also encouraged participation at any time during the presentation.

2. PowerPoint Presentation

A PowerPoint presentation, which will also be available on the website, was presented and discussed the following:

- What is Access Management
- Access Features Typically Managed
- Benefits of Access Management
- NHCPR Report 420-Impacts of Access Management Techniques
- Crashes in Arizona, 2003, Access Related Crashes in Arizona
- Policy Initiative
- Arizona Access Management Program Work Flow Diagram and Schedule
- Access Decisions:
 - Access Permitting Process
 - Planning
 - Local Agencies
 - ADOT Construction Practices
 - Arizona Highway Projects
 - Right of Way Activities
 - Transportation Board
 - Traffic and Safety Programs
- Vision Statement



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- Program Objectives
- Local Agency Perspective on Access Management
- How a Statewide Access Management Program will work.
- Conceptual Access Management Decision Flow Chart
- ADOT/Local Agency Coordination
- Classification System
- Access Classifications: The Heart of the Program
- Hierarchy of Access Classifications
- Access Classification Considerations
- Colorado Classification System
- Key Design Elements
- Waiver/Variance Process
- Other Considerations: Access Management Plans, Interim Permit Approval
- Brief Your Local Officials
- Business and Development Community Participation
- District Agency Outreach

The project's Vision Statement was discussed. Rick Ensdorff explained that we need to have a framework but it needs flexibility and a way to deal with "gray areas". Keep the program consistent and reliable while allowing local flexibility to manage access decisions over time. Critical to the success of this program is partnerships and a consistent approach to access management.

Rick Ensdorff explained that Access Management is defined as a systematic management of location, spacing and design of access roads and access points. Access Management includes state highways. The benefits of Access Management were further explained, including Safety, Mobility, and Economic.

Rick Ensdorff discussed that the data shows the more access points there are, the greater potential for accidents. Access Management accidents are defined as occurring at a driveway and state roadway, or, at an intersection and state roadway. The goal in safety, for example, would be to reduce the incident of car crashes 50%, increase pedestrian and cyclists safety, and to increase roadway capacity 23-45%. Although currently unavailable, Rick Ensdorff stated that he hopes to have specific data for Arizona to share with agencies in the near future.

Rick Ensdorff went on to discuss the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) establishment and composition. The TAC involves representatives from some of the following entities: ADOT, State Engineer, Senior staff, District Engineers, local agencies, MPOs/COGs, tribes, the Attorney General's Office, and the League of Cities and Towns.



Rick Ensdruff then walked through the Work Flow Diagram. He mentioned that the Access Management has many benefits and again stressed that ADOT and local agencies need to start and maintain a partnership, as that will be the key to make this program a success.

Chip Davis of Yavapai County raised the question; do counties have the same authority and rights as the State for Access Management? Rick Ensdruff replied that ADOT can deny access, however, if the access were to be determined as both safe and reasonable there would be no need to deny.

The Access Management plan is to have all state highways designated with classifications. This workshop, and the previously held similar workshops, is the first key milestone in this project. The ADOT TPD website has a link to this project for background, current status, and next step information and resources. Rick Ensdruff then stated that, over this Summer, the program's framework and classification system will be developed with help from attendees, a business community/developer focus group, and the project's Technical Advisory Council (TAC)'s assistance. In September/October of this year, we will be back with attendees at these agency staff workshops again to review the draft framework and classification system, back to review again, and then on to the implementation stage. This project is planned to have the system up and operating by June 2007.

Rick Ensdruff reiterated that the access management program consists of several pieces - as outlined in the Access Decisions slide - its not just permits. Access Management will be an everyday tool that will support long-term use and consistency.

John Pein outlined that Access Management would help establish priorities. As an example, asking, "What function does this road best operate as?" It is not like a turn-back study. It is in all of our interest to partner.

Rick Ensdruff stated that legal review has been done with the Attorney General. A 3-page white paper is available. The Current Practices study is nearly complete, providing an overview of where we are at now and where we are heading.

Per Rick Ensdruff, the agency outreach conducted, so far, has revealed that the procedures and policies are not consistent and do not have enough "teeth". He posed the following questions to the group: "What's going on in Prescott?", "What works?" and "What doesn't?"

Chip Davis wondered if the state can make the decisions and the local governments can then determine if that will work. Rick Ensdruff responded that the Access Management program is an element that will support your long-term day-to-day decision-making processes.

Rick Ensdruff then discussed the Program Objectives slide. He highlighted a few, out of the 12 total, objectives. The following numbers highlighted are those listed on the slide. Number four; that to "Update ADOT roadway design guidelines and traffic engineering policies" is critical. Number eight; "Establish clear procedures and guidance for adoption and implementation of corridor access management plans", this is



something everyone needs to understand how it's done. And finally, number nine, "Provide outreach, technical assistance, and incentives to encourage local government participation." If this does not happen, the Access Management program will not be successful. He emphasized the importance of having consistency and clear procedures and guidance for adoption and partnership.

A representative from Yavapai County then inquired if the funding for the Access Management program is only to develop the program or if some money can be used on purchases. Rick Ensдорff replied that it could be for both and that would be determined as the program moves forward. The County representative then asked if stakeholders agree to partner to purchase access rights to speed up the process, for example, could these segments be moved up in the priority process? Also, has a cost analysis been completed looking at purchasing later versus prior? A 5-lane section median versus retrofitting, for example. The County representative added, also, has the Attorney General (AG)'s Office looked into these types of questions and issues? Rick Ensдорff replied that studies have been completed and that the issue has been looked at by the AG's Office. He stated that he cannot reply in detail as to the studies' results or on the AG's behalf, but can ask for two of our team members who are considered national experts in access management as well as these exact types of questions, as well as our AG Office representative who is on our TAC, for comments.

Another attendee wondered if there was a cost analysis done on a corridor, after development, as opposed to retrofitting it. As an example, there is a five-lane section in Yavapai County and the retrofitting of a median. They were curious as to the cost for that project. Rick Ensдорff said he wasn't sure, in general, the cost analysis of such a situation, but said he would check into it and see if there were any numbers available.

Someone brought up that, in many cases, the business community can be fearful of change; it can be a sore subject. However, in many instances fear is worse than reality. Public meetings alone may not be enough to sway them. But often times, after a discussion, they are more receptive to an idea. Basically, although it may take some time, the business community needs to become more educated about these types of decisions and the processes involved.

A comment was made that there are cases where an access-controlled corridor's right of way was purchased, but that "the landowners, later, sell that access to others."

In Cottonwood, it was relayed that the citizens may be of the belief that access management will not benefit them from an economic standpoint. The Cottonwood representative wondered if there were any studies available that will show how it will positively affect them? Rick Ensдорff replied that although economic benefits actually vary, statistics have shown in the states that have an access management program in place have had positive "moving forward" and long-range economic benefits. For example, in Colorado, most developers, having the framework and classification system available to them, did their homework in advance and came to the table prepared when applying for a permit. Florida and New Jersey case examples were also provided by Rick Ensдорff.

Chip Davis provided the example of SR 89A. It seems SR 89A was implemented but it didn't have access management, now they are looking into an alternate for the alternate. He also provided another example relating to SR 260 in which general citizens and existing businesses support access management plans, while businesses or landowners might oppose the plan for monetary gain financial reasons. In the SR 260 case, 15 miles were approved in 1999 and, 13 meetings later, approved again in 2000. In 2004, a funding mechanism for the project was found. However, in 2004, property owners started divvying up land, resulting in current access management agreement problems, now. He further added a couple of suggestions, with regard to the plan, to ADOT. He wanted to ensure ADOT would follow-up, gets agreements signed, etc. Rick Ensdorff replied that the Statewide Access Management Program will address these types of issues.

An inquiry was made, to the effect of, what happens to "issue" areas after the Access Management plan is implemented. Will those already developed areas need to be re-addressed and changed? Rick Ensdorff emphasized that the plan would not change already completed areas, but that they may be addressed under re-development and/or new development. In Colorado, if there were a traffic increase, in an area, of greater than 10% then there needs to be a reapplication of the permit – the previous one would not be valid. That, should there be a similar rule in Arizona, could allow for changes to an already existing area. Basically, the Access Management plan, once implemented, would be from this point forward.

Interestingly enough, someone mentioned a study done by Iowa State regarding Access Management. It was relayed to the group that, per this participant, the study found the more restrictive the access to a business, the better the business. It seems the comparison was done with businesses, to the community, as a whole.

Dallas Hammit added another example. This one involved the increasing growth from Congress to Yarnell. Although not called "Access Management" there is something similar in place, it also includes planning. This is helpful, as there appears to be a potential for significant growth in that area.

Ken Spedding wondered if the plan would allow for phasing in development? At the local level, this is a significant issue relating to improvement districts and paybacks for growing areas. Rick Ensdorff agreed that this "rational nexus" relationship is a challenge and is one that he will discuss further in the presentation, particularly how it can be used to support access management.

Rob Iagrum, with the Tonto National Forest, asked how this program will address public lands in relation to developing a classification system, as there is already an access management plan in place for them.



Following a scheduled ten-minute break, Rick Ensdruff then discussed the Decision Flow Chart slide. He indicated that the development of the Access Management has not been developed and that it will be by working with those in the room and additional resources. He also mentioned that Access Management plans are in place in the following states, Colorado, New Jersey, Florida and some in New Mexico and that Arizona can benefit from their experience.

A question was posed to the group, by Rick Ensdruff, "Does your agency approve a developer's plan prior to having an access plan?"

Chip Davis responded "yes" and "no". "Yes", prior to the building permit, but conditional planning and zoning "no" until they get ADOT permit approval.

Another responder, representing the Yavapai-Prescott Indian Tribe said that, in their instances, there isn't such a clear relationship. In some cases the tribe may be the master leaseholder or even the builder. Emphasis is on the tribe to obtain approvals and is not as conditional. The tribe would be more of a partner or serve as a subholder of the permit before it gets to the ADOT process.

In Chino Valley, the representative stated that permits are obtained closer to construction as there are, often times, changes.

Dallas Hammit stated that in their District, ADOT holds monthly meetings with Yavapai County's planning, and roadside staff. It was noted that, in the past, there were situations in which developers and landowners would communicate different stories to the agencies when applying for a permit. ADOT and the local agencies recognized that it was important that they not be played against one another. Now, with ADOT and the local agencies meeting monthly and together with developers, conflicts have been reduced and ADOT, local agencies, and the developers work and move forward better together.

A Yavapai County representative commented that he concurs with the earlier statements regarding the benefits of developers and landowners knowing access management criteria and design guidelines early-on. Rick Ensdruff added that it assists all in moving forward and being in the same place as ADOT and the local agencies early-on and throughout the permit process.

Rick Ensdruff then returned to the presentation and discussed the "Classifications" slide in the presentations. He also included additional Fort Collins experience examples, such as where the developers actually did homework before applying for a permit based on the classification system, which prevented "the wheel from being reinvented each time." He also added that a classification system 1) Determines your expected performance, and 2) Provides day-to-day permitting actions that support the state and local transportation plans. Determining the classification process will be interactive between agencies and ADOT.



A representative from Yavapai County and from the City of Cottonwood brought up concern that ADOT may not be able to keep up with current permit request demands, as their much-needed involvement requires more right of way group staff. For example, with the quantity of reviews needed from ADOT, as well as timing of reviews needed, such as a local official not being able to be at two different developers meetings if they occur at the same time. Especially if they are located in different areas – such meetings often involve much drive time. Dallas Hammit agreed with this concern, adding that a challenge for ADOT staff has been that, early in the permit request meetings, ADOT might not have enough of the necessary information to grant permit approvals. For example, the use not being identified or clearly defined, no supporting traffic volume or impact studies provided, etc. He said that it's best to have ADOT engaged right after they see the studies. However, he stated that he believes that a clearly defined classification process would change the amount of effort needed for meetings. The representative from Yavapai County agreed that laying down both ADOT and County criteria and guidelines next to each other for developers, early-on, would greatly assist in moving the process forward. Rick Ensdorff stated that, in his experience, programs that provide developers and landowners with established access management tools and a classification system, which sets criteria and defines design guidelines related to access management, result in developers and landowners coming to the table prepared and on the same page with permitting agencies.

Rick Ensdorff showed the partial Excel spreadsheet for the State of Colorado's classification. Rick Ensdorff recognized there will be some circumstances that the classifications will require some flexibility, but that would be unique. He used Colorado as an example, saying that 90% of the time the classification is clear, but admitted that there are those instances, about 10% of the time, where a more flexible option is needed. The clear and defined classification process at the core will limit those unique circumstances; however, it is known that, throughout the project, some tweaks will be needed. Rick Ensdorff again outlined the projects deadlines, the final report, including the classifications, which would be complete in June 2007.

As for amending or changing a classification after it has been approved, Rick Ensdorff pointed out that although it can be done, it is a rigorous process. Everyone, ADOT, the local agencies, and the State Transportation Board has to agree to these changes. Changing a classification is not common. In Colorado there were only six changes to classifications in the first 10 years, and the majority of those were due to changes in land use.

Rick Ensdorff went on to outline some possible Arizona classifications. The plan is to have these mostly complete by the end of this summer. For the next workshop, there will be some real road examples and classifications. Rick Ensdorff also hopes to have examples for each specific to the Prescott area. So as not to surprise those at the meeting with this information for the first time, the plan is to update the website and send out correspondence. If you have attended this meeting you will be contacted with updates regarding this project.

Rick Ensdorff mentioned, with the Access Management Program in place, that design guidelines will occur early in the process. Currently, most access plans for Arizona are done during construction.



Rick Ensdorff then went on to discuss the next steps and action items needed for the project to move forward. He indicated that we needed to leave them with important homework to go back to their organizations and to brief the local agencies and officials, especially the elected officials and senior management, about this Statewide Access Management Program. A letter, from ADOT, is being drafted and will be sent to elected officials in the next couple of weeks. He also asked for attendees support in identifying and engaging their area business and development communities. He stated that a focus group for them will be put together and that we need to hear from attendees which local businesses and developers need to be involved in this process. We will be initiating and following up with attendees via email regarding this need, as well as regarding additional process status and progress needs requests. Rick Ensdorff then informed the group that additional project information, resources, and updates are available to them via CDs, brochures, handouts, and the website.

Rick Ensdorff discussed the upcoming district outreach meetings schedule for the project. He stated that we will be working with district agency staff throughout this Summer, as well as at the next series of outreach workshops, which will include a series in September and October for Classification Orientation and in March and April of 2007 for the Implementation Briefings.

The Access Management information can be found on within the TPD site within the ADOT website. In addition to the website, the email address from which the invitations were sent, ADOT_SAMP_Project@urscorp.com, can also be used as a resource to obtain answers and provide comments.

Rick Ensdorff then asked for feedback on the value of this presentation to the attendees and asked for suggestions for the future ones. No additional comments were received at this time.

Adjournment

The meeting ended at 4:15 p.m.